



JOINT COMMISSION
APPOINTED TO ARRANGE FOR A
WORLD CONFERENCE
ON
FAITH AND ORDER

"Ἴνα πάντες ἐν ὧσι, καθὼς σύ, πάτερ, ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ γὰρ ἐν σοί,
ἵνα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἡμῖν ἐν ὧσιν, ἵνα ὁ κόσμος πιστεύσῃ ὅτι
σύ με ἀπέστειλας.

Ut omnes unum sint, sicut tu Pater in me, et ego in te, ut
et ipsi in nobis unum sint, ut credat mundus, quia tu me
misisti.

*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I
in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may
believe that thou hast sent me.*



QUESTIONS OF FAITH AND ORDER
FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE
PROPOSED CONFERENCE
BY THE RT. REV. A. C. A. HALL, D.D.
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¶ Copies of this leaflet may be had free on application to the Secretary, Robert H. Gardiner, Gardiner, Maine, U. S. A.

¶ Names are not entered on the permanent mailing list, unless the Secretary receives a personal request; but the Commission is glad to enter on that list all who will write to the Secretary that they desire to receive future publications.

¶ Contributions for the expenses of the Commission and the Conference may be sent to the Treasurer, George Zabriskie, 49 Wall St., New York, U. S. A.

A Joint Committee of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, held in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the United States of America, in October, A.D. 1910, made the following report:

“Your Committee is of one mind. We believe that the time has now arrived when representatives of the whole family of Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, may be willing to come together for the consideration of questions of Faith and Order. We believe further, that all Christian Communions are in accord with us in our desire to lay aside self-will, and to put on the mind which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We would heed this call of the Spirit of God in all lowliness, and with singleness of purpose. We would place ourselves by the side of our fellow Christians, looking not only on our own things, but also on the things of others, convinced that our one hope of mutual understanding is in taking personal counsel together in the spirit of love and forbearance. It is our conviction that such a Conference for the purpose of study and discussion, without

power to legislate or to adopt resolutions, is the next step toward unity.

“With grief for our aloofness in the past, and for other faults of pride and self-sufficiency, which make for schism; with loyalty to the truth as we see it, and with respect for the convictions of those who differ from us; holding the belief that the beginnings of unity are to be found in the clear statement and full consideration of those things in which we differ, as well as of those things in which we are at one, we respectfully submit the following resolution:

“WHEREAS, There is to-day among all Christian people a growing desire for the fulfilment of our Lord’s prayer that all His disciples may be one; that the world may believe that God has sent Him:

“RESOLVED, That a Joint Commission be appointed to bring about a Conference for the consideration of questions touching Faith and Order, and that all Christian Communions throughout the world which confess our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour be asked to unite with us in arranging for and conducting such a Conference. The Commission shall consist of seven Bishops, appointed by the Chairman of the

House of Bishops, and seven Presbyters and seven Laymen, appointed by the President of the House of Deputies, and shall have power to add to its number and to fill any vacancies occurring before the next General Convention."

The report was accepted joyfully by the Convention, and the resolution contained therein was adopted unanimously.

THE CONFERENCE ON
QUESTIONS OF FAITH AND ORDER
IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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[This paper is deemed worthy of publication by the Commission of the Protestant Episcopal Church on a World Conference on Faith and Order, which, however, does not hold itself responsible for any statement or opinion herein expressed.]

IT is sometimes asked what would be the sort of questions to come before the proposed Conference of representatives of different religious bodies, which agree in acknowledging our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.

The answer that I personally should make would be something like this:

The Edinburgh Conference (with all the preliminary discussions of its committees) showed the possibility and helpfulness of a frank discussion by representatives of different Christian communions of problems connected with Missionary work. This was en-

gaged in and carried out without any compromise of principles or disloyalty to the recognized standards of the several religious bodies. Each contributed out of its own experience to the common treasury. All learned from all, in the way of example or warning, by common inspiration and mutual counsel.

It is now proposed that questions which were then deliberately avoided—concerning the Faith and Order of Christ's Church—might be discussed in a similar manner by those who, while differing in many points of doctrine and organization, agree in the acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. Here surely there must be room for mutual explanation, with a view to the better understanding of different positions and statements, leading (it may be hoped) to the gradual removal of difficulties and hindrances that stand in the way of common ac-

tion and closer fellowship amongst disciples of our Lord.

I. QUESTIONS OF FAITH

The common ground of acknowledgment of Jesus Christ as God and Saviour obviously excludes many questions which believers have to discuss with those who do not share this belief. But many subordinate questions remain for conference; for instance, the acceptance of Christ's Godhead involves at once His relation to the Father, and the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son—that is, in theological language, the doctrine of the Trinity.

Belief in Christ's Godhead must be supplemented by the acknowledgment of His real and complete Manhood—that is the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Can the Scripture teaching on these points be better summarized and

guarded than in the language of the historical Creeds of Christendom?

Questions of Soteriology (the mode of our salvation) and of Eschatology (what follows death), about which there are differences among those who acknowledge Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, have to be considered in the light of His teaching and that of His Apostles.

With regard to all these and other matters connected with the Faith, two remarks may be made by way of caution or of encouragement.

(1) The ancient Creeds state facts, not theories about those facts. No theory or explanation of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, nor of the Creation or the future life, has been put forth with the authority of the whole Church, nor imposed upon Christians as matter of faith.*

** The Athanasian Hymn gives no theory or explanation of the Trinity or the Incarnation; it only plainly states the complementary and balancing facts.*

(2) Explanations and systems of theology will naturally vary with the progress of knowledge. The same unchanging truths must be expressed in the language of every age, as in the tongue of every people.

It is of course recognized that faith *in* and surrender to a Person is of far greater importance than right belief *about* a Person; yet this also is important, and cannot be ignored.

II. QUESTIONS OF ORDER

1. Do we gather from the New Testament Scriptures that it was our Lord's design that His disciples should be gathered into a permanent visible society; *or* was individual discipleship the essential feature of His plan, Christians being left free to associate themselves together as they might think best for mutual helpfulness and common action?

2. It would generally be agreed that

association and fellowship among His disciples was a distinct part of our Lord's teaching; but the outward association is by some regarded as sufficiently realized in local and independent churches, without any wider organization or common higher authority, save as any churches may be voluntarily federated together. This would seem to be the idea not of One Body (the visible aspect of the Church) inspired by One Spirit (its invisible power and life), but of many bodies under the guidance of One Spirit.

3. Granted that a permanent visible society was an integral part of our Lord's design, was any form of organization or government given to the Church; *or* was the body of disciples left to devise, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, such organization and government and Ministry as might seem best in different parts of the world and at different times? In other

words, are the rulers and ministers of the Church simply chosen and deputed by the body of the people (like the mayor of a city), and then in answer to their prayers, endowed by God with power to act for Him in the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments; *or* is the position of the Ministry in the Church more truly compared to organs of the physical body—divinely ordained, not humanly devised—with their specific functions to be exercised on behalf of the whole body?

4. If it be granted that the Ministry is a part of the organization of the Church, divinely instituted, then the question remains as to the mode of transmitting the ministerial commission.

These notes seem to give the order in which questions have to be faced. Fruitless and bitter discussion is often caused by disregard of the right order

in which questions should be considered. These hints may be suggestive for our own thought and for friendly discussions and conferences on the subject.

O LORD Jesus Christ, Who saidst unto Thine Apostles, Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; Regard not our sins, but the faith of Thy Church, and grant her that peace and unity which is agreeable to Thy will, Who livest and reignest God for ever and ever. Amen.

O LORD Jesus Christ, look with pity, we beseech Thee, upon Thy Church weakened and hindered by differences and divisions; bless the effort to bring together in conference all who confess the faith of Thy Holy Name, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

